volume eight, issue two

THE CLAW

december 2019

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EMILY EXPLORES EWARDSVILLE'S EATS

page 16

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Views Editor • Jack Pifer
Staff • Katelyn Harris, Sydney Hershberger, Emily Kloostra, Lauren Johnson and Hannah Thompson
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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

A true EHS December is upon us: we're all wondering if it will be 60 degrees or 6 degrees, and if we'll make it through the end of the semester in one piece.

The truth is that we will. We always do. This, too, shall pass.

One way to do it is in style. On page 4, Life Editor Cassi Reaka highlights EHS fashionistas who thrift their favorite outfits.

Meanwhile, EHS athletes are practicing to maintain the excellence for which our school is known. The dance team performs at football games, basketball games and school assemblies, but it does even more than that. On page 9, A&E Editor Taylor Meek details the rigorous competition season for which the team prepares every year.

On pages 14-15, Staff Writer Hannah Thompson analyzes Kanye West's newly released gospel album, "Jesus is King." She certainly does not sing the album's praises.

You're not you when you're hungry, so if you're looking for a slice of heaven, Edwardsville has many pizza options from which to choose. On pages 17-18, Staff Writer Emily Kloostra debriefs the quality of some local pizzerias.

It's likely that you will want a beverage with that pizza. Sports Editor Jack Barker gives you permission on page 20 to drink it with a plastic straw. Sorry, turtles.

Ask EHS on page 23, lastly, offers student opinions on snow days. Do they really rob days from summer? It all depends on your perspective.

As another semester winds down, I wish EHS nothing but gifts, good grades and glow-ups.

Jacqueline Glenn
Co-Editor-in-Chief

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We appreciate letters to the editor, so long as the topics discussed remain school appropriate. These letters may not be any longer than 200 words, and can be sent to letterstotheclaw@gmail.com or brought to room A113 before or after school. We reserve the right to reject any letters for any reason, including inappropriateness, lack of space, etc. We are not required to give an explanation for rejected letters.

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LIFE

STUDENT SPREADS AWARNESS ABOUT POTS

McCracken, a student living with POTS, poses with confidence.
photo by Emily Kloestra

by Jacqueline Glenn, Co-Editor-in-Chief

Seeking answers in March 2016 about her fatigue and gastrointestinal problems, doctors considered a variety of diagnoses for senior Colleen McCracken: a brain tumor, gallstones, an ulcer, anxiety, the flu.

"I went through a lot of doctors telling me that I'd just be this way for the rest of my life, that it's all in my head, that this isn't real," McCracken said. "And that was damaging."

After a year of misdiagnoses, testing and frustration, McCracken was sent to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., in April 2017, where doctors performed a tilt table test, in which patients are strapped to a motorized table and observed.

"A tilt table test is used to evaluate the cause of unexplained fainting," Mayo Clinic's website states. "The test can help determine if the cause is related to your heart rate or blood pressure."

Doctors then concluded that McCracken had Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS).

POTS, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine's website, is a blood circulation disorder that causes symptoms such as lightheadedness, nausea and vomiting, shakiness, forceful heartbeats or heart palpitations, exercise intolerance, severe fatigue and brain fog—difficulty focusing or paying attention.

It is chronic—it can be treated with increased salt intake, exercise and medication, but there is no cure. Sometimes the symptoms disappear, however.

McCracken's gastrointestinal specialist explained that many teenagers share her plight.

"He said that all the teenagers come in with GI problems, and they actually have POTS," McCracken said. "But nobody knows it, because nobody knows about POTS."

Fueled by her frustration, McCracken decided to pursue her Girl Scout Gold Award in POTS education. The award is the most prestigious honor one can receive in the Girl Scouts of USA, and it requires McCracken to complete 80 hours of community service.

"When I finally learned what was going on, I was like 'everybody else needs to know,' because this took way too long," McCracken said about her diagnostic process. "And way too long for me was short for everybody else."

Only 25 percent of people with POTS are diagnosed within a year of feeling symptoms, according to a 2013 study done by Dysautonomia International. The average patient experiences a diagnostic delay of five years and 11 months. Many people with POTS will never know that they have it.

McCracken has highlighted this in her presentations to kinesiology students at SIUE, nurses at the Madison County Health Department and in District 7 and firefighters at the Edwardsville Fire Department. The goal of these presentations, she said, is to educate people about the disease and to raise awareness about it—and possibly to help someone who is unaware that they have it.

"Usually when I give the rundown of the disease, someone in every single presentation can recall an experience with either a colleague or a patient who they believe had POTS," McCracken said.

This year, Mayor Hal Patton proclaimed October Dysautonomia Awareness Month in Edwardsville as a result of McCracken's efforts. Since POTS is a form of dysautonomia, McCracken said, it was important that it be recognized in that way.

"I'm wondering, is there someone else at school, in my community, at one of the classes at SIUE, that I've presented to who's going through this and then they have a big 'aha' moment, and then they go to the doctor and get solutions," McCracken said.

Her ultimate goal is to spread awareness about POTS, McCracken said, and she will continue her activism even after she reaches the 80 hours required for her Gold Award by making more presentations and creating a YouTube channel that will educate its viewers about the disease.

"My advice to people who have been recently diagnosed is to stand up for yourself," McCracken said. "If you think about it negatively, I think it's going to turn out negatively. Just view it as a minor setback."

THRIFTING: ECO-FRIENDLY WAY TO SAVE MONEY AND LOOK GOOD

by Cassi Reaka, Life Editor

Denim jackets, vintage jeans, comfy sweatshirts. All of these things can Americans throw out about 10.5 million tons of clothing per year, and thrift shopping is one way that people are combating this issue according to the Berkeley Student Environmental Research Center.

Senior Marcia Williams began thrifting after encouragement from her grandmother.

"I just enjoyed looking for more unique outfits and continued, little did I know I would be obsessed," Williams said. "I like to thrift to save money, to reuse and recycle clothing, to get rid of some of my clothing items and to just go for fun with friends."

As problems within the fast fashion industry have been exposed, more people have become conscious of where their clothing comes from according to the Berkeley Student Environmental Research Center. Although the sustainable clothing industry has slowly been growing, many of these pieces are expensive, so people have turned to thrifting as a cheaper alternative to be environmentally friendly.

> "I JUST ENJOYED LOOKING FOR MORE UNIQUE OUTFITS..."

Fast fashion is inexpensively mass produced clothing. Besides the moral issues of terrible conditions for workers and the factories causing huge amounts of pollution, because the clothing is made so cheaply, it falls apart quickly and must be thrown away and replaced. All of that clothing then ends up in landfills.

According to the Berkeley Student Research Center, a single pair of jeans uses roughly 1,800 gallons of water and the production process generates the same amount of greenhouse gases as driving 80 miles.

Although there are positive environmental impacts to thrifting, many people also participate simply because it's fun. The cheap prices allow people to try out unique pieces that they probably would not pay full price for according to senior Anna Bruss.

"Thrift store prices are generally much cheaper so I feel more confident to try things out without paying big bucks," Bruss said, "and normally those bold pieces become my favorite ones to wear and also the most complimented."

Bruss got into thrifting after searching for unique pieces of clothing at Goodwill for a Europe trip.

"I ended up finding some really nice stuff that I did not expect to find and now I'm a Goodwill regular," Bruss said.

The clothes come from all over and from all different types of people, so there is something for everyone in thrift stores.

"I thrift because it is the cheapest way to find cool clothes," Senior Collin Gerber said. "I have a few favorite pieces but the one I wear the most is my army pants which I paid $3 for."

Although the prospect of thrifting might seem daunting when one first walks into a chaotic, overstocked Goodwill or similar department style thrift store, Williams, Gerber and Bruss all agree that the secret to finding good pieces is to look at everything.

"Sometimes really nice clothing pieces end up getting put in the wrong place and you will completely miss them because you didn't even think to look in that location," Bruss said.

According to Bruss this can be time consuming but it is usually worth it. Williams also tries to look for items that stand out among the racks.

"I often try to look for different patterns or colors to find some good pieces," Williams said.

Although typically more expensive shopping at smaller locally owned thrift shops can help to narrow down the overwhelming collection of clothes. Williams and Gerber both regularly shop at Found by the Pound and Williams also frequents Avalon, both of which are in St. Louis.

Although there are fewer clothes to sort through at these stores, the local Goodwill can have just as cool of pieces. Thrifting anywhere means clothes being recycles and less ending up in landfills.

Williams said, "My favorite part of thrifting is finding name brand items for an affordable price, knowing that I'm participating in recycling clothing and leaving the store with more than enough."

The thifters show off their latest finds.
photos by Emily Kloostra

OCD MANIFESTATIONS MORE THAN NEATNESS

Art by Sarah Fidahussain

by Sydney Hershberger, Staff Writer

Walking down the hallway at school is usually not a hard task to complete. You walk up or down the stairs and then you proceed down the hallway to your class. Easy, right?

Now imagine this same task done under a different set of rules than usual. When walking up or down those stairs you must start and stop on the same foot. If an odd number of steps makes this impossible then you'll have to improvise. If while on the stairs or walking down the hallway your hand happens to brush by a wall, you touch the same wall with the opposite hand. The same rule applies to living things. If the person is going the opposite way, oh well.

Even these two rules might seem like a bit much, right?

For most people, we can simply ignore these rules if someone were to give them out. Simply say no. There's nothing to lose or gain if you follow them anyways.

However for a person with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or OCD, these "rules" hold much more weight.

According to the the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), over 2.2 million people in the United States suffer from OCD. That's about 1 percent of the population. Out of those 2.2 million, 25 percent are early onset and one-third experience symptoms during their childhood.

"Obsessions are intrusive and unwanted thoughts, images or urges that cause distress and anxiety," says ADAA.

Sabrina Copple, a senior with OCD, attests that it's more than just wanting things to be neat or organized as many people tend to believe.

"I'VE GOTTEN USED TO SOME OF MY HABITS..."

"I'm not really neat with several things, like my room. I know where everything is so it doesn't bother me," Copple said.

Copple's "habits" revolve around food and drink. "Things like grapes or crackers have to be eaten in multiples of two. I also have to drink is multiples of two, so I have to take two drinks or a multiple of that at a time." Copple also has non-food-related obsessions, such as having her pencils facing a certain way on a table.

"I've gotten used to some of my habits so it doesn't bother me too much unless my habits are messed with."

Sophomore and percussionist Ryne Montgomery's obsessions also do not fit the same image of "neatness" that Copple referred to. Montgomery's habits revolve around the way he moves and what he touches.

"Playing the drums used to be really hard," Montgomery said. "I would want every beat I played on my right hand to also be played on my left hand. If I couldn't get them to match I would get really upset about it."

Montgomery says that marching during marching band used to be difficult at times.

"In my head every object has a number If I see that object then I can walk that number of steps," Montgomery said, who later added that there are quite a few variables that go into the number of steps.

"I also want to start and end on the left foot, but DCI style does that anyways so it's not usually a problem."

Montgomery was able to overcome certain obsessions pertaining to percussion by playing the drums more and more.

"I think my brain understood I had to get over it if I wanted to be a percussionist."

However, Montgomery still has present obsessions, such as mirroring sensations and movements on both sides of his body.

Guidance counselor Heather Neese has dealt with these issues with students before.

"It can be very challenging for them," Ms. Neese said, "especially in the school environment."

Ms. Neese then explained that OCD tends to be more active during the school day, when there are more people around to disrupt everyday life.

"We're lucky enough to be in a community where they can get outside help as well," Ms. Neese said.

Still, Montgomery wants people to know that obsessions vary from person to person and should not be stereotyped.

"I hear a lot of people say they have OCD because they like having things neat," he said, "but that's not really what it's like. It's really insulting for people to just say they have the same experiences as I do when they don't at all."

STUDENTS PREPARE FOR FAVORITE TREATS, TRADITIONS

by Katelyn Harris, Staff Writer

With the holidays on the way, students are already starting to think about their favorite treats. The holidays don’t only just bring the best meals, but they also bring the best desserts.

Everyone has a favorite holiday treat from cookies to pie, and EHS students are excited to not only eat them, but also make them.

Cookies are many students’ favorite. Junior Olivia Gray said her favorite holiday treat is cookies. In particular, her favorite cookie to have during the holidays is chocolate chip. Gray said she sometimes even makes them from scratch.

Sophomore Megan Bequette also likes to make cookies during the holidays. She said her favorite to eat and make are snickerdoodles.

It seems making holiday treats with family has become a tradition for many students.

Freshman Addie Vaughn loves Christmas sugar cookies. Vaughn said it’s been a tradition for her and her family to make them every year since she was around 4-years-old.

Her favorite part about making them is “spending time with family and decorating the cookies.”

Senior Lydia Thiems also has a tradition of making sugar cookies with her family from scratch.

Thiems said she loves to do the tradition because she doesn’t get to spend a lot of time with her family and this is a way she can.

“I really like that I get to spend time with my family because we all have conflicting schedules so it’s hard to find time to all be together.”

Senior Kevin Watson said that recently he and his brother have started to make gingerbread cookies as a tradition for the holidays. Watson created the tradition as a way to make each Christmas memorable.

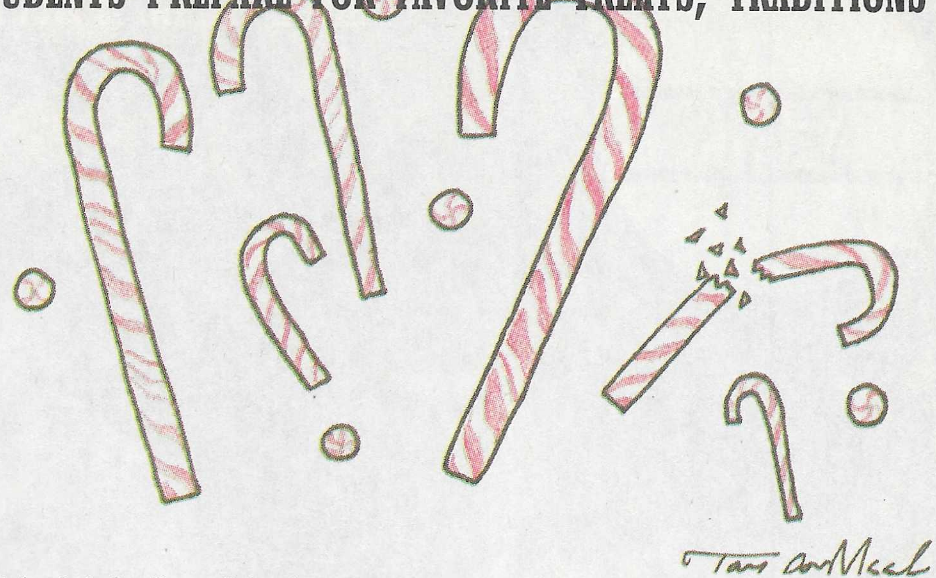
“I love cooking and making things from scratch and the fact that I can do it with family.”

Senior Elly Schmitt also makes treats with her family each year.

“The holidays are what bring us together,” Schmitt said, “and for my favorite holiday [Christmas] my family makes chocolate covered pretzels.”

After making the chocolate covered pretzels, they give them to their neighbors.

“My whole family does it, from my 27-year-old sister to my 3-year-old sister.”



Schmitt’s family tradition has gone on for several years.

Other students don’t necessarily make their favorite treats; they just love to eat them.

Sophomore Keira Shelton said her favorite holiday snacks are chocolate truffles and the popcorn that comes in popcorn tins.

Shelton gets the popcorn tin from her grandma every year.

Different types of pies are also a favorite to many students.

Junior Milo Reed-Elliot said his favorite holiday treat is pie. He enjoys a variety of pies because “there’s a pie for every holiday.”

Senior Elizabeth Thompson said she also enjoys pie, pumpkin in particular.

“It’s super easy to make, and it tastes awesome,” she said.

Pumpkin pie is also Junior Gabbi Trauernicht’s favorite holiday treat. She said she also likes apple pie.

Trauernicht said she loves the holidays because she gets to spend time with family she rarely sees.

“It [Christmas] brings us all together,” Trauernicht said, “my cousins are older and live all over the county so during the holidays we all get together at my grandmas and it’s really nice because we rarely get to see each other.”

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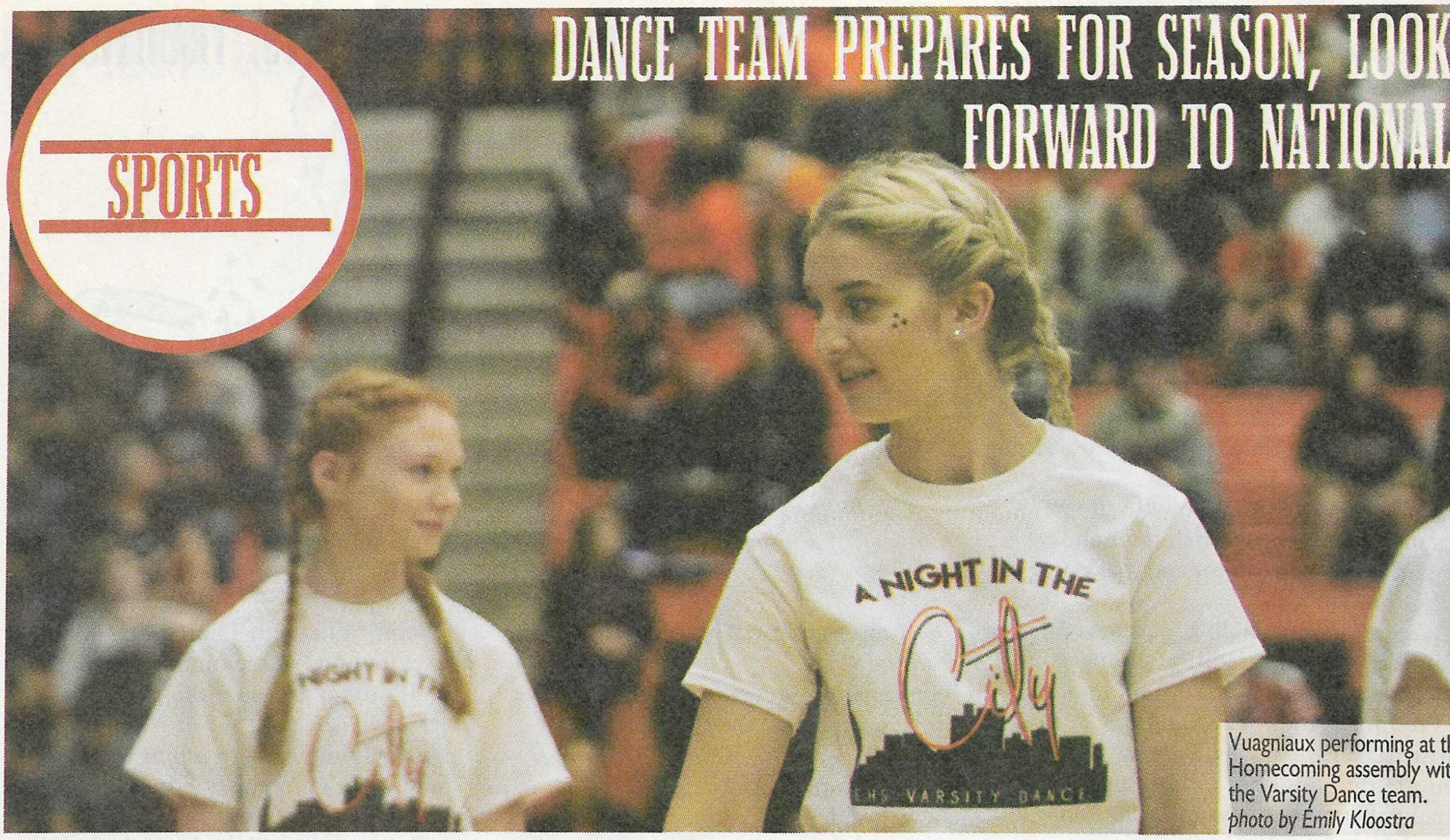
SPORTS

DANCE TEAM PREPARES FOR SEASON, LOOK FORWARD TO NATIONAL



Vuagniaux performing at th
Homecoming assembly wit
the Varsity Dance team.
photo by Emily Kloostra

by Taylor Meek, Life Editor

The dance team is preparing for not only their basketball game performances, but also competition season for the Southwestern Illinois Conference.

Spectators can see dance team performances at events such as the football halftime shows or at the annual holiday assembly, which features one of their more untraditional routines.

"A lot of people just think the dance team is just dancing at games, and shaking your butt, but it's about being a team," senior Emma Vuagniaux said. "Competition season is totally different. People don't understand that what we do is a really emotional thing."

The amount of hard work and dedication that the girls put in is fueled by head coach Danielle Lusicic.

Lusicic has been working with the dance team for two years after previously coaching the Marquette Catholic High School dance team and dancers for the Purina football team in St. Charles, Missouri.

"Their competition routine last year was amazing. It showed a lot of strength that we have on the team as far as their technique abilities," Lusicic said.

Its previous season took coach Lusicic by surprise when something rare occurred. "Last year we actually made state through the Illinois High School Association and Illinois Drill Team Association," Lusicic said. "We got third at state at IDTA. Our first Regional competition was at Althoff [Catholic High School] and we made first place there and qualified for state at the first competition, which is rare."

After this achievement, the team upheld their status throughout the season as one of the best in the region.

> "PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT WHAT WE DO IS A REALLY EMOTIONAL THING."

The Edwardsville Intelligencer reported that the dance team hosted last year's IDTA competition, in which they competed against 11 teams of the Southwest Conference, placing second behind Highland by one point.

Every year for two days the team is coached by a choreographer who teaches its members a new lyrical dance routine.

"It's more of a contemporary style of dance. It's very flowy and emotional," Vuagniaux said. "Lyrical is more like ballet style."

The choreographer pushed the girls to their limits to create a routine that encompasses the strengths of each dance

"We loved her because she was so sweet and created an amazing dance for us," freshman Gabby Rathgeb said. "She challenged us with the dance, but made sure we were comfortable with everything. Overall, it was just a very co experience."

That may have been the last time the see that choreographer, though.

Vuagniaux said that every year the team brings in a choreographer to teach, and this year the team had someone fly i from Los Angeles.

The team will compete Class 3A and have already begun their preparation for performances for the IDTA and IHSA.

"For these competitions, we do a lot of 'cleaning,'" junior Kenzie Weisner sai "This is basically bisecting each move un everyone has it perfect."

For the team, this competition season should be one to remember.

"We're going to nationals in February Vuagniaux said. "We usually qualify for nationals, but it's pretty expensive, so we don't go every year, and this year we're going and it's going to be at Disney World.

There's a big competition at the Worldwide Sports Complex and we perform there."

QUIERRA LOVE TO ENTER NEW COURT AT SIUC

by Hannah Thompson, Staff Writer

High school basketball has not only given senior Quierra Love a college scholarship, but also friendship, relief from high school stressors, and a strong work ethic.

Love recently committed to playing Division I basketball at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill.

Love's basketball career began in sixth grade after an action-packed NBA game inspired her to play.

After playing for years, Love said that multiple college basketball teams expressed interest in her, but location played a large role in her final decision.

"There were some other colleges interested in me, but I didn't want to go too far. Two hours is enough for me," Love said with a laugh.

Love said the school also has a good medical program, which is beneficial to her as she wants to pursue medical school after graduating from SIU. She also enjoyed the "family environment" at Carbondale, which reminds her of Edwardsville.

Another big factor in her decision was that Makenzie Silvey (Edwardsville Class of 2017) will be a senior at SIU next year.

"I got to play with her during her senior year and my freshman year [of high school], and I will get to play with her for a year at Carbondale," Love said. "...She is my role model."

Love discussed her other college offers with girls varsity basketball coach Lori Blade, but it was not until Love visited the school that she made her final decision.

"She saw [SIU] as a good fit, and I also saw it as a good fit for her," coach Blade said. "She'll be able to step in and contribute right away with the skills that she can bring."

Love has played varsity basketball for coach Blade all four years of high school.

"She did not start her freshman year, but she was an integral part of our success through the [2017] state tournament," said coach Blade.

The girls team placed second in the state championship in 2017 after a 41-40 loss to Geneva. Coach Blade mentioned Love in an interview with the Intelligencer shortly after the loss, describing her as a "spark plug."

Coach Blade said that one of the best parts of coaching Love has been watching her develop into a team leader.

Love shoots to score in game against Belleville East.
photo by Mason Kane

"[Quierra] is a little quiet," coach Blade said. "She leads by her actions as much as anything. But she has become a more vocal leader, which she'll need for college."

While Love is very coachable and has a clear passion for the game, her greatest physical strength is her speed, according to coach Blade. Love's friend and teammate, senior Maria Smith, echoed this statement saying that Love's speed is a big contributor to her success on the court.

"It produces steals on defense, which gets her offense going as well," Smith said. "She can drive past almost anyone, and even if you are able to stop her, she will knock down the shot."

Another of Love's teammates, senior Jacquelin Anderson, said Love takes her job as point guard very seriously and makes sure the whole team is on the same page. She does what is best for the team and is a great ball handler.

Love distributes the ball around the court as well. One of coach Blade's only critiques about Love's play is that she can sometimes pass the ball too much.

"She is going to have to look to score a little more," coach Blade said. "Her mental approach, as much as anything, is what she is going to have to make a big jump in before college."

Working on her skills is not an issue for Love, according to coach Blade.

"She is always working," coach Blade said. "Sometimes I have to ask her to dial it back because she is in the gym all the time."

Off the court and out of the gym, Love said she is very close with her teammates, especially the seniors.

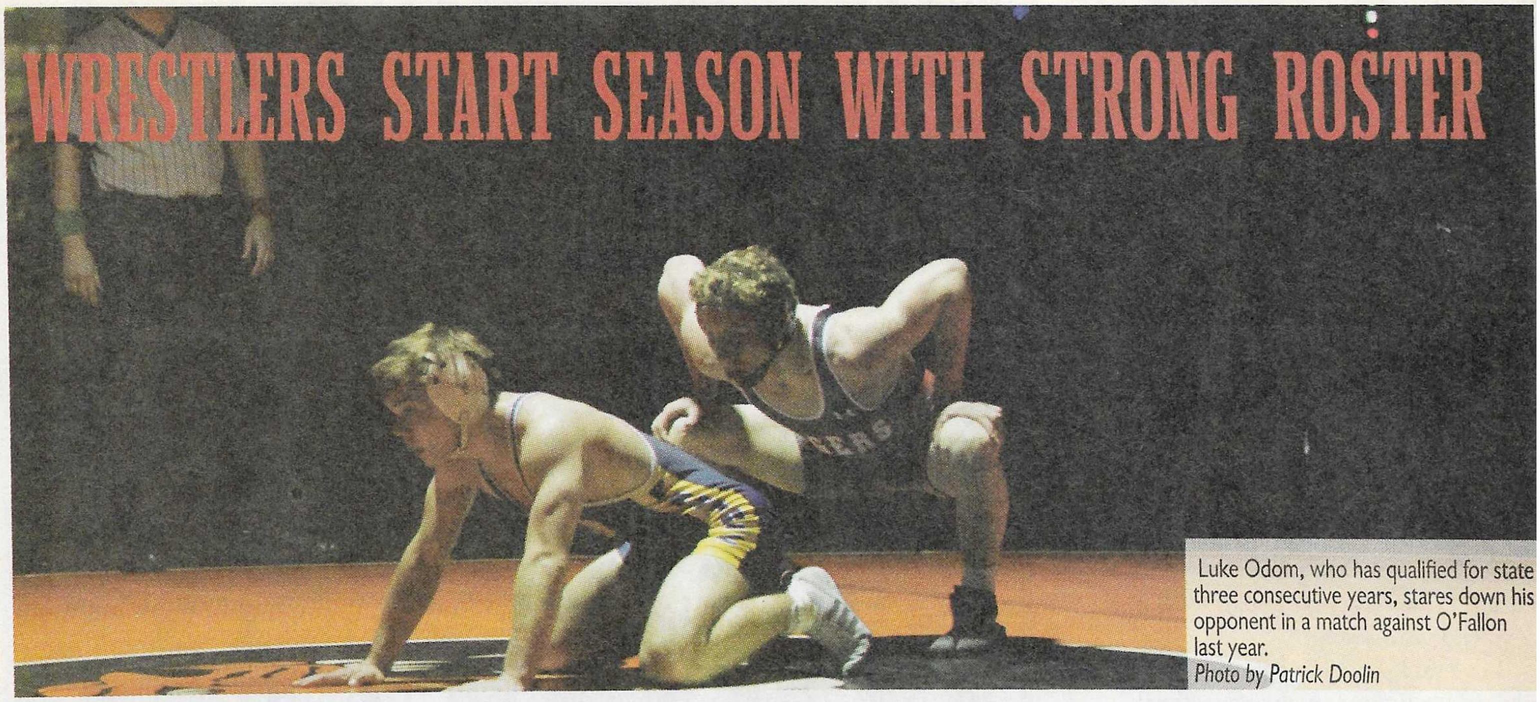
Smith has played with Love since eighth grade and has been really impressed with her overall game.

"She is the only person I have seen 'break' people multiple times," Smith said. "Breaks means to make someone fall because they cannot keep up with you."

Smith believes that Love is going to be very successful at SIU.

"She will most definitely be successful playing in college," Smith said. "Lots of good things will come her way."

WRESTLERS START SEASON WITH STRONG ROSTER



Luke Odom, who has qualified for state three consecutive years, stares down his opponent in a match against O'Fallon last year.
Photo by Patrick Doolin

by Jack Pifer, Staff Writer

After a loss in the state quarterfinals last year to DeKalb, Edwardsville wrestling is looking to qualify for state for the second year in a row.

Last year Edwardsville nearly broke their dual meet win-loss record with 27-1 in dual meets and a seventh place finish at state.

Returning seniors include Luke Odom and Lloyd Reynolds who both placed in the state tournament last year, as well as hopeful state qualifiers Will Zupanci, Caleb Harold, Blake Moss and Drew Gvillo.

Last year Odom, now a two-time state placer and University of Illinois signee, was unable to finish out the individual state tournament due to an injury in the first round of the state tournament.

Senior Blake Moss is looking forward to the state meet.

"I do believe we will be able to return as a team," Moss said. "We have fantastic wrestlers at every weight class..."

The season starts in November and continues through February.

Preparing for the season requires certifying your weight class, meaning wrestlers must make sure they are not at an unhealthy weight. Throughout the season the athletes are weighed before each meet as well.

The boys practice nearly every day in the winter according to junior Landon Vuagniaux.

"Practice is a two-hour grind," Vuagniaux said. "The team always works on the mental side of wrestling by applying its physical aspect."

After 30 years of coaching Wagner has seen many great athletes come through the program. He believes that the qualities that make a good wrestler are strength, speed and agility.

In addition to the top three, coach Wagner said that endurance and mental toughness are also important.

"You're going to become a well rounded athlete doing wrestling at a young age," coach Wagner said.

Each wrestler faces his own personal challenges in the sport.

"The toughest part about wrestling is the commitment and work ethic one needs," Vuagniaux said.

> "I DO BELIEVE WE WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN AS A TEAM. WE HAVE FANTASTIC WRESTLERS AT EVERY WEIGHT CLASS."

In addition to a dedicated mindset, there are other important things to think about when in a match.

"Things are always changing," senior Tyler McCracken said, "right when you think you have the best technique there is something to counter it."

Some of the team goals this year include continuing the eight year streak o conference championships and advancing to state as a team.

Wrestling features two state meets: an individual one and a team one. The individual state meet comes before the team state meet. Once a team qualifies fo state they compete in a bracket of 16 team for the championship.

"If your team wins individual regional off of points calculated through your matches, your team can go to sectionals," Zupanci said. "If you win that dual again another regional-winning team, you go t team state."

Members of the wrestling team have big individual goals for the upcoming yea as well.

Harold hopes to place at state and brea 100 wins for his high school career. Whil Moss wants to qualify for state again

"I want that state title," Odom, a three-time state qualifier with two top four finished under his belt, said in an interview with The Telegraph. "It hasn't happened yet."

In addition to performing well

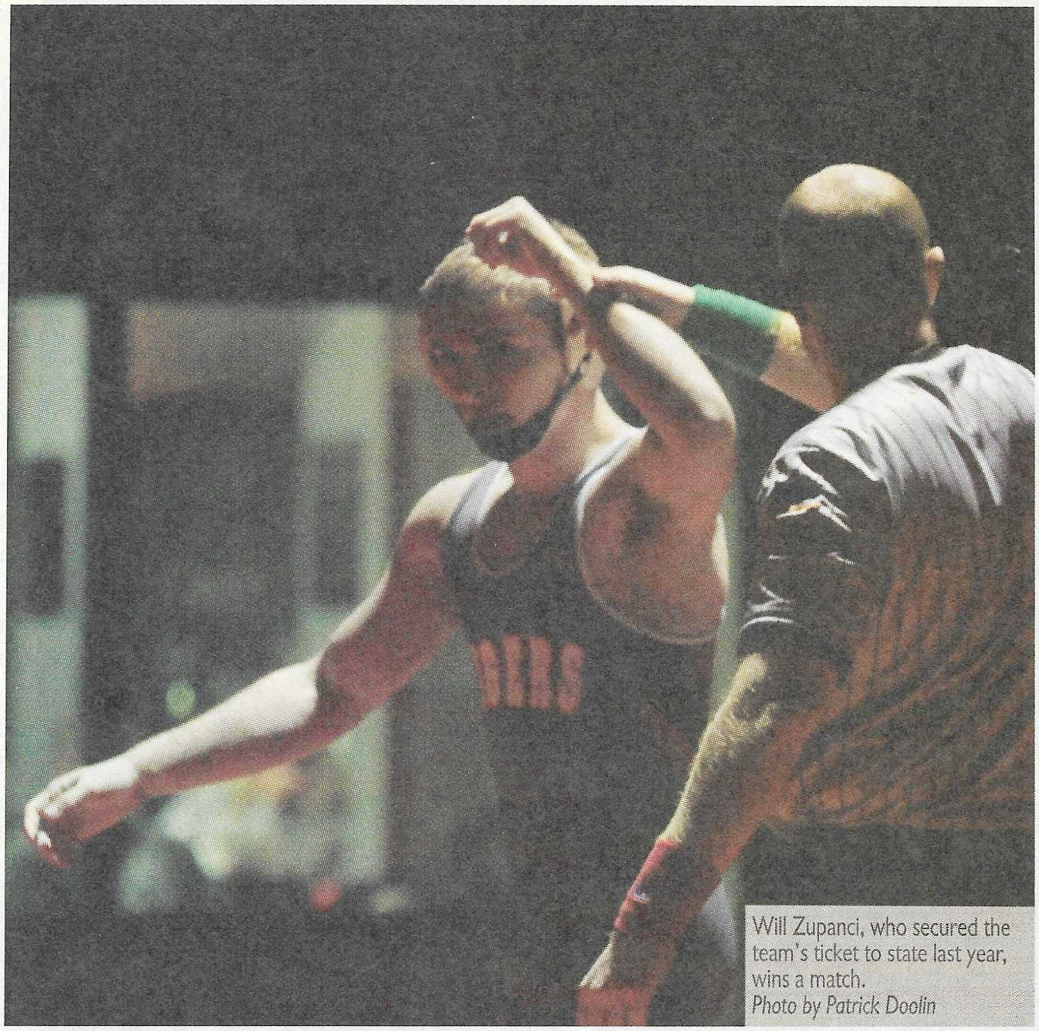
throughout the season, Zupanci sees an opportunity to step up as a leader.

"I want to be one of the top-ranked wrestlers in the state and be one of the main contributors to our team's success," Zupanci said. "But above all else, and as a team captain, I want to lead our team in not only wrestling but life as well."

> **"RIGHT WHEN YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE BEST TECHNIQUE, THERE IS SOMETHING TO COUNTER IT."**

Wagner had wisdom to share about the sport.

"This is my 30th year of coaching – not all here. Winning used to be the big thing when I was younger, but I really love working with the kids and developing them into men," Wagner told the Edwardsville Intelligencer, "We really have so many life skills to learn in here because life isn't always easy."



Will Zupanci, who secured the team's ticket to state last year, wins a match.
Photo by Patrick Doolin

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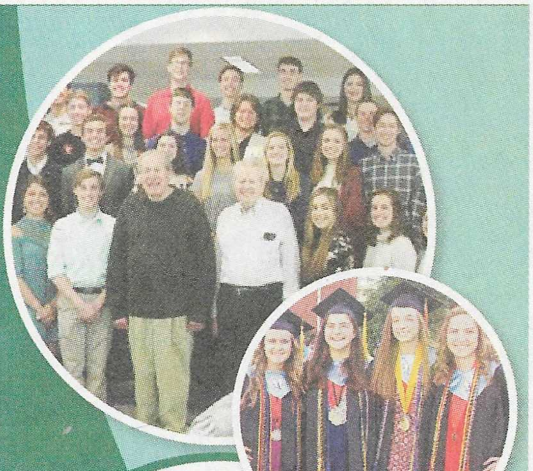
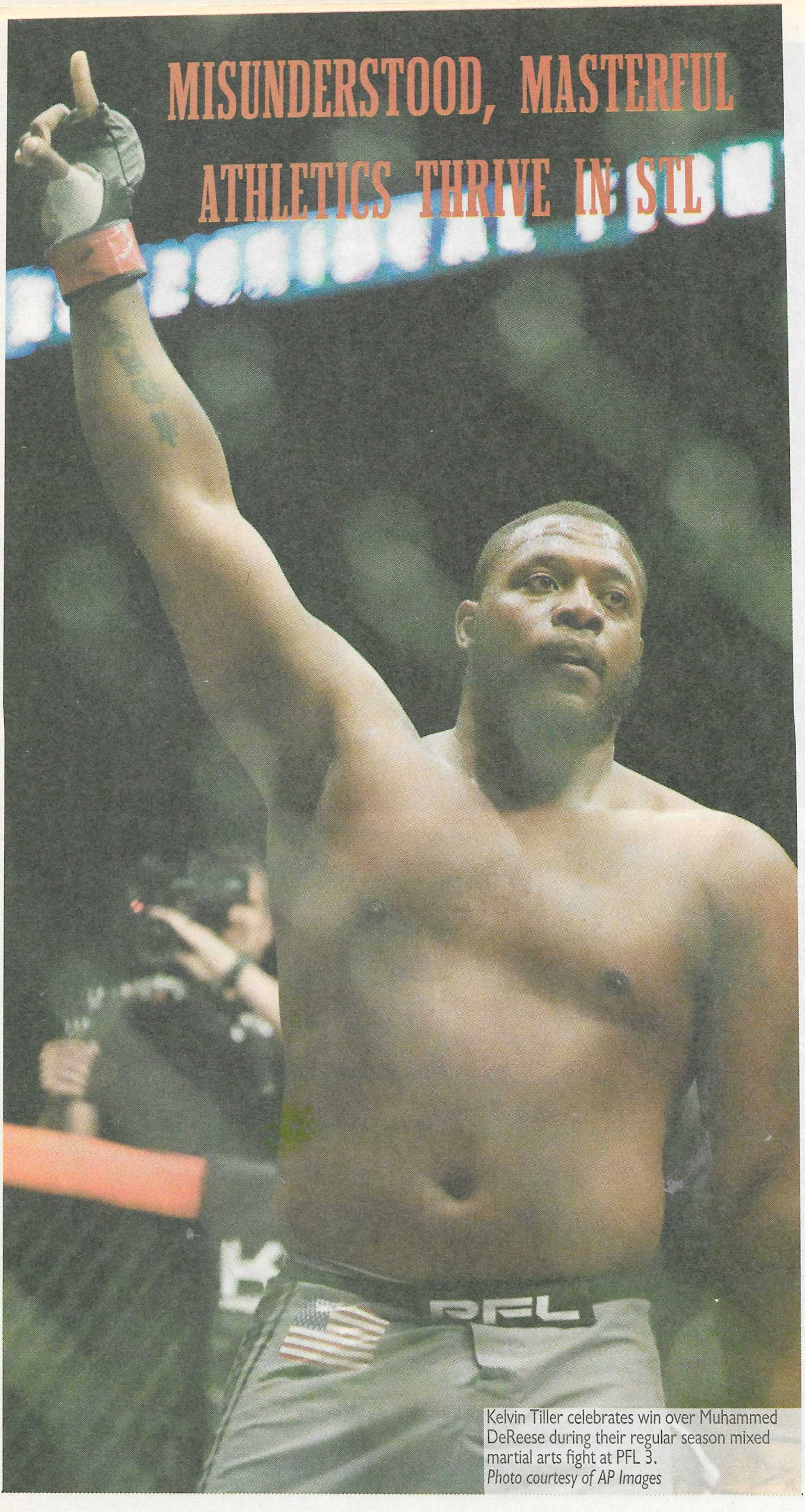
- Fine Arts
- Engineering
- Drama
- Education
- Trade and Vocational Schools
- Criminal Justice/ Law Enforcement
- Medical Technology *(Forensics/Phlebotomy/Pathology)*



EDWARDSVILLE COMMUNITY Foundation
Connecting Donors to Our Communities

MISUNDERSTOOD, MASTERFUL ATHLETICS THRIVE IN STL



Kelvin Tiller celebrates win over Muhammed DeReese during their regular season mixed martial arts fight at PFL 3.
Photo courtesy of AP Images

by Ryan Stewart, Co-Editor-in-Chief

Often, we only get to see MMA on the massive, international level of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, but if you're looking for something a little closer to home, mixed martial arts has a place in many fight clubs and gyms just across the river in St. Louis.

In a sport loved by dedicated fans who see the human struggle and flashy bouts as awe-inspiring feats of willpower, it can be difficult to see that knockout fight all the way across the world or that giant, domed spectacle shielded behind a massive ticket price and tucked in cities hundreds of miles away.

So many of us simply turn to our screens and in an instant are brought into that ring. But what if there was a better way? And not to sound like an in-your-face advertisement, but what if you could be right in that action with a short car trip and low entry fee? Well, Missouri has your back.

Shamrock FC, who stream their matches as well in case you do ever want to sate that immediate need for MMA, are based right in St. Louis and offer seats from $57 all the way up to around $200. This is a much more realistic threshold for most of us, as compared to the ticket price of UFC, starting at around $100 and goin all the way up to $600.

And you may say, "Well that's great, but you get what you pay for. Higher prices mean more quality fighters and performances." But that is far from the truth.

You could take the best fight ever recorded at a UFC event and staple it next to the best fight ever recorded at a Shamrock event, and the results would speak for themselves. The fighters in both are tremendous athletes and their abilities are both worth your hard-earned money and valuable time.

If you'd like to support this organization and witness some immense sportsmanship, Shamrock 327 will take place on Jan. 11, 2020, at the St. Louis Ameristar Casino.

Other notable MMA organizations that have participated in the St. Louis area include Miletich, Gracie Jiu Jitsu and America's Top Team, all of who are independent training companies that have participated in tandem over various events, pitting their students against one another in shows, the most notable of which took place in 2006, MMA Genesis, which furthered the wave of MMA support in St. Louis.

Taking place at The Family Arena in St. Charles, the event brought in a crowd of thousands. The amateur MMA scene exploded into the mainstream, attracting new viewers, many of whom have stuck around and today contribute to the avid fan base around the sport.

Despite a growing acceptance and embrace of the sport, many involved are concerned with the image MMA still had. JW Wright, owner and head trainer of RGDA Gracie Jiu Jitsu Academy in St. Peters, believes that there is much more to the sport that most of the public isn't exposed to, and because of this, they only have the unfortunate injuries sustained by some fighters to judge the sport by.

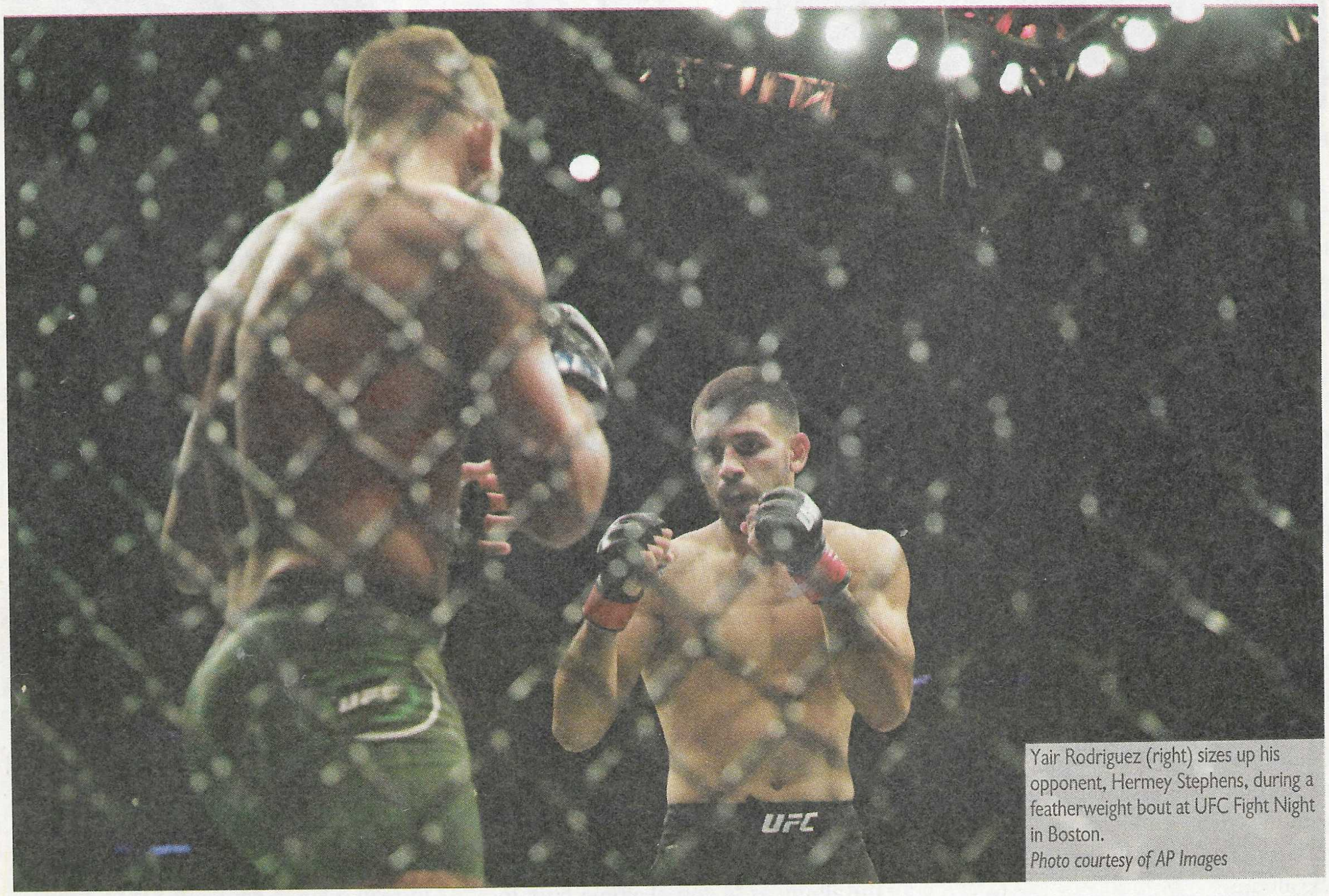
"Some people have dreams of being champions and others just want to build a circle of friends and get a good workout," Wright said in an interview with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "We're not just a bunch of guys that just go in there wanting to brawl. It's almost a family atmosphere when we're together and a brotherhood eventually develops among our athletes."

> "WE'RE NOT JUST A BUNCH OF GUYS THAT JUST GO IN THERE WANTING TO BRAWL."

As someone who is admittedly biased in favor of Wright's statements, I think it's important to take a moment to express that the reason I enjoy the sport, and the reason many of the people I've talked to enjoy it is because of the incredible bravery and commitment the athletes have for the sport.

Stop me if you've heard this before, but it takes a lot of guts to get up in a ring with an opponent and freely hit them with all you've got, knowing full well that they've come out to do the same to you. And while sure, tensions can run high and from time to time leading some mixed martial artists to take it too far, more often than not the goal is to put on an entertaining show and compete in a friendly albeit competitive, combative environment.

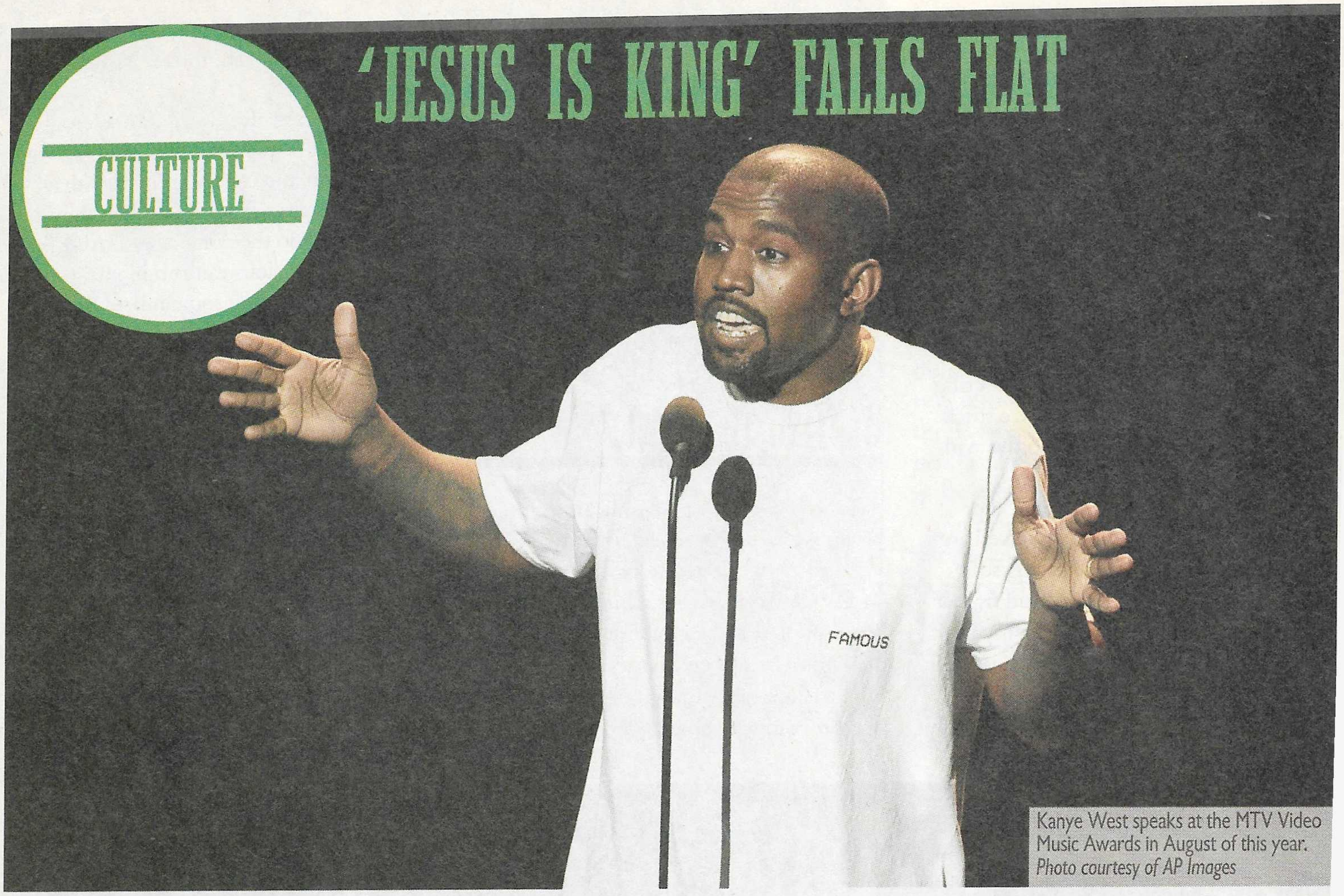
But, stepping off my soapbox and getting back to the reason you've stopped on this page, some amazing events are happening in St. Louis. If you'd like to experience them your best bets are to use trusted websites like mixedmartialarts.net, fighthardmma.com and any seat website you'd like such as Ticketmaster or Seatgeek.



Yair Rodriguez (right) sizes up his opponent, Hermey Stephens, during a featherweight bout at UFC Fight Night in Boston.
Photo courtesy of AP Images

CULTURE

'JESUS IS KING' FALLS FLAT



Kanye West speaks at the MTV Video Music Awards in August of this year. *Photo courtesy of AP Images*

by Hannah Thompson, Staff Writer

Kanye West released his ninth album, "JESUS IS KING" on Oct. 25, and while the album was met with a great deal of anticipation, it only takes one listen to know that it is an unmitigated misfire.

Pitchfork Magazine summed up the album perfectly.

"Christianity is the unwavering focus of Kanye's gospel album, a richly produced but largely flawed record about one man's love of the Lord (and himself)," Pitchfork reported.

Although gospel and hip-hop music are not my preferred genres, I approached West's album with an open mind and did my best to receive it without any preconceived notions.

After listening to the album, however, I quickly realized that a strong Christian background was essential to identifying with the lyrics. And it seems, according to West, that this is the entire point of the album.

"We are here to spread the gospel. I'm not here for your entertainment," West said when speaking about the album and the accompanying 38-minute concert film.

With that said, it is still difficult to understand whom West is actually targeting with his new work. While one might assume that his target audience is regular churchgoers who frequently listen to gospel music, it is hard to imagine that even this subset of the population would enjoy West's attempt to spread his connection with religion.

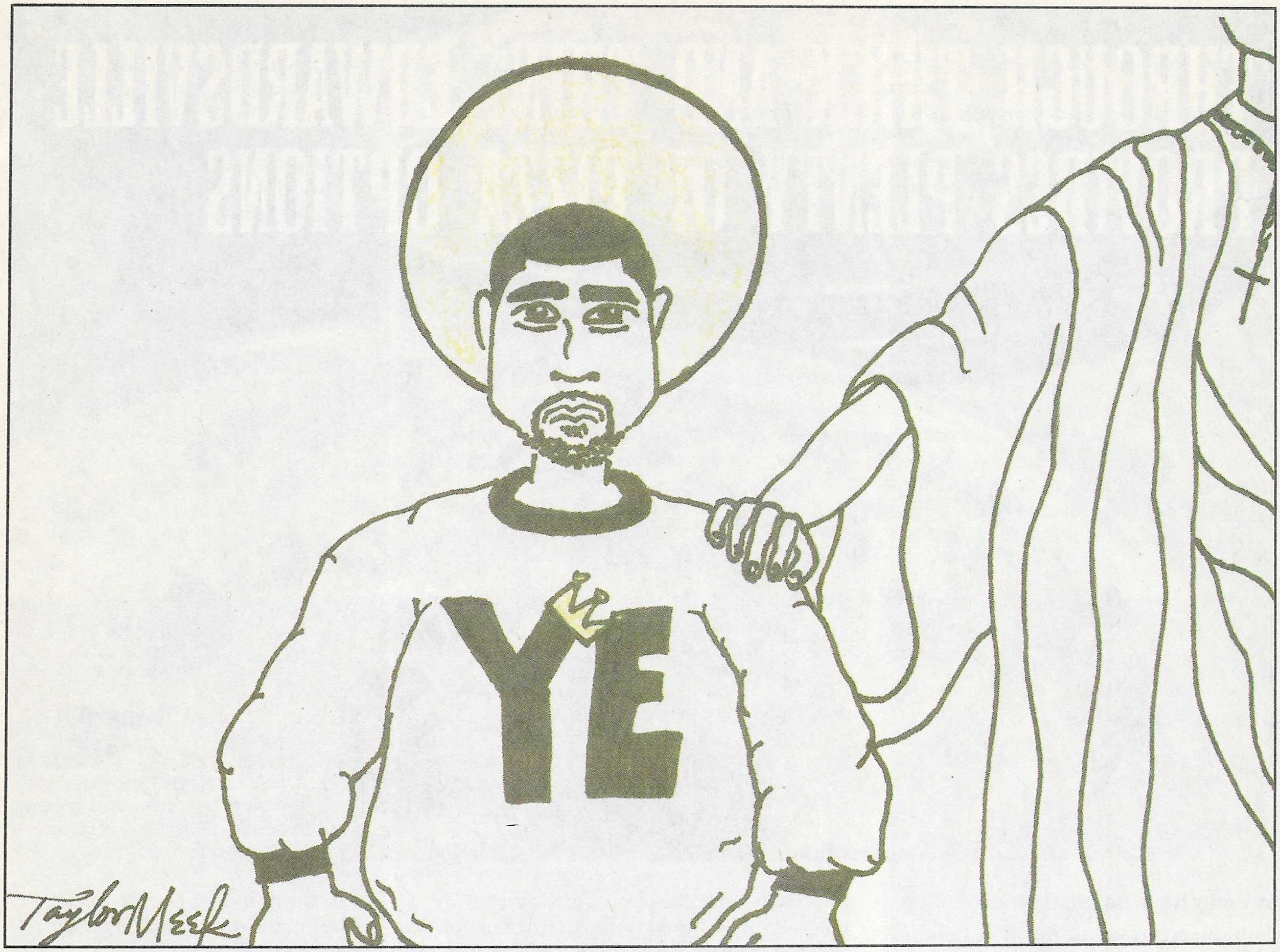
> "WE ARE HERE TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL. I'M NOT HERE FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT."

Paste Magazine brilliantly described the album as "a gospel album built for a church at a Supreme pop-up shop." Unlike traditional gospel music, "JESUS IS KING" has frequent pop culture references and an unintentional comedi aspect to it that makes it feel almost ridiculous.

One of the first songs on the album, "Closed On Sunday," is a notable catastrophe. West raps an awkward and even laughable metaphor throughout the song: "closed on Sunday/you're my Chick-Fil-A." Unfortunately, the absurdity of the lyrics did not end with this song.

Immediately after "Closed on Sunday" is the song "On God," where West invokes complaints about the IRS with the lyrics, "The IRS want they fifty plus our tithe/Man, that's over half of the pie/I felt dry, that's on God."

These lyrics have absolutely no relation to God or the gospel, but instead seem to emphasize West's sens



of wealthy entitlement.

As the highest paid hip-hop artist of 2019, West earned an estimated $150 million this year with his music alone, according to Business Insider. Rather than focusing on his stated purpose of spreading the gospel, West uses the lyrics in "On God" as a platform to complain about his financial situation.

West then goes on to say "That's why I charge the prices that I charge," which seems to be both a reference and justification for the extraordinarily high prices he charges for his Yeezy brand clothing and shoes.

As I continued to listen to the album, my distaste for the music ultimately turned to utter boredom.

The track titled "God Is" is the essence of tiresome as nearly half the song has West simply rapping the same two words, "God is." And still, by the end of this song I did not have any understanding of why God is significant to West's life. As noted by Paste Magazine, the track "somehow makes three minutes and 23 seconds feel like an eternity."

West's stated attempt to spread the gospel through his new work is really just a self-indulgent monologue that gives a simple and surface level explanation of West's connection with the Christian God he mentions throughout the album. In his poor attempt to convey his connection, the album becomes redundant and boring.

Perhaps the best and most rewarding part of the entire album is that it is over in 27 minutes.

Rolling Stone

"If West really, truly believed that he could save someone's - everyone's - immortal soul, you wish he had tried a little harder."

Paste Magazine

"...a gospel album built for a church at a Supreme pop-up shop."

Pitchfork

"...as he continues to test the edge between spontaneous and half-finished, it gets harder to ignore the facts hovering outside the frame."

THROUGH THICK AND THIN: EDWARDSVILLE PROVIDES PLENTY OF PIZZA OPTIONS

Joe's Pizza offers 10-inch pizzas and provides the opportunity to split them between different kinds of pizzas.
Photo by Emily Kloostra

by Emily Kloostra, Staff Writer

Edwardsville seems full of everything. Full of banks, full of law firms, full of mattress stores. But the one thing that truly overpowers everything else in Edwardsville area is the sheer number of pizza places.

Deciding which pizza place to go to can be confusing, so whether you're searching for a tasty pie on a night in or a fancy thin crust for that date you're trying to impress, look no further than Emily Kloostra's Edwardsville Area Official Pizza Review.

Joe's Pizza and Pasta

At my first visit to Joe's, I was surprised by the variety offered.

Joe's provided the opportunity to split each pan of pizza into two kinds, so I was able to try four of its offerings: the pepperoni and chicken bacon ranch on thick crust and the spinach artichoke and taco pizza on the thin crust.

The thin crust pizzas were wonderful. I love spinach artichoke dip, and the fact that I could get it on a pizza made me ecstatic. The base was a garlic cream sauce, which worked well with the piles of artichokes, tomatoes and cheese. This was by far my favorite pizza of the night.

"I LOVE SPINACH ARTICHOKE DIP, AND THE FACT THAT I COULD GET IT ON A PIZZA MADE ME ECSTATIC."

I moved on to the taco pizza and was slightly skeptical. I grew up eating taco pizza at a little pizza place in Iowa with my dad, and I was worried that nothing would match up to those memories. Joe's made sure my worries were for naught.

The pizza had just the right combination of flavorful taco meat mixed with refreshing lettuce and crunchy chips. My only complaint is that the slices were drenched in an orange melted cheese, which made the pizza a little soggy.

While the thin crust pizzas earned my affection, the thick crust pizzas left something to be desired.

My first slice was the pepperoni, and it was a disappointment. The crust was burned and dense. The marinara sauce was oddly sweet and clashed with the pepperoni.

The chicken bacon ranch did not redeem the thick crust. Loaded up with chicken and bacon and smothered in ranch, the slice was too much. Too much salt, too much cream, too little differentiation between flavors.

Although I am not a fan of everything, Joe's provides something for everybody at a reasonable price ($11-$13 for a 10-inch pan).

Peel

Peel has long held the standing of "most fancy pizza place in town" in my head. It's expensive compared to other places, ranging $14-$17 for a 10-inch pie, and it uses unique ingredients.

The prosciutto pizza, for example, has a base of roasted garlic olive oil and is topped with prosciutto, fingerling potatoes, whole garlic cloves and rosemary.

While I love pizzas that don't have a red sauce, this one made me pause. Really? Potatoes on pizza?

I decided to take a chance on this specialty pizza. Overall it was good, but not worth the $16 I paid for it. The rosemary was unevenly distributed so that some bites tasted like soap while others had no rosemary flavor at all. The whole garlic cloves made me excited because I am a huge garlic fan, but they lacked flavor and were an odd texture.

I also tried their formaggio pizza, which was delicious. Peel has a sweet red sauce, but it has less of a fake, candy-like taste than Joe's tomato sauce. The crust was wonderful and light, and the combination of cheeses created a tasty medley.

Peel has good pizza; there's no denying that. However, they don't have good prices. If I wanted to eat a cheese pizza, I'd be better off going to Domino's for $5.

Dewey's

While my trips to Dewey's usually consist of a salad and a calzone, this one was all pizza. I tried pepperoni on the red sauce, a plain white sauce slice, and the Socrates Revenge.

> "I COULD EAT DEWEY'S WHITE SAUCE WITH A SPOON."

The red sauce wasn't anything special, but it wasn't sickly sweet like Peel or Joe's. It provided a solid base for the pepperoni and left me with nothing to complain about.

The white sauce was a clear front-runner for me. It has a strong garlic flavor without being overpowering, and with just the right amount of cheese on Dewey's signature pillowy crust, the slices were perfect.

The Socrates Revenge added spinach, black olives and tomatoes to the wonderful white sauce. This specialty pizza was delicious, and because I was able to split a large 17-inch with my cheese-pizza-loving friend, it only cost me about $8.

The Verdict

Each pizza restaurant has its own strengths. Joe's thin crust is heavenly, Peel creates unique combinations and I could eat Dewey's white sauce with a spoon.

However, Dewey's is the clear winner of the Edwardsville Pizza Battle. With a strong crust, the ability to split pizzas and prices that don't make me gasp, I know where I'll be heading next time I want a nice slice of pizza.

The melting nacho cheese got all over as I tried Joe's taco pizza.
Photo courtesy of Patty Kloostra

With its thick burned crust, Joe's pepperoni was my least favorite pizza.
Photo by Emily Kloostra

Peel's prosciutto pizza had me excited with all of its unique toppings.
Photo by Emily Kloostra

'FROZEN II' MELTED MY SNOWMAN

by Jacqueline Glenn, Co-Editor-in-Chief

I sunk into a welcoming recliner of the Edwardsville AMC's Dolby Theater on "Frozen II"'s opening night, popping overpriced popcorn into my mouth and awaiting the same perfection that Disney produced in "Frozen I."

I was underwhelmed.

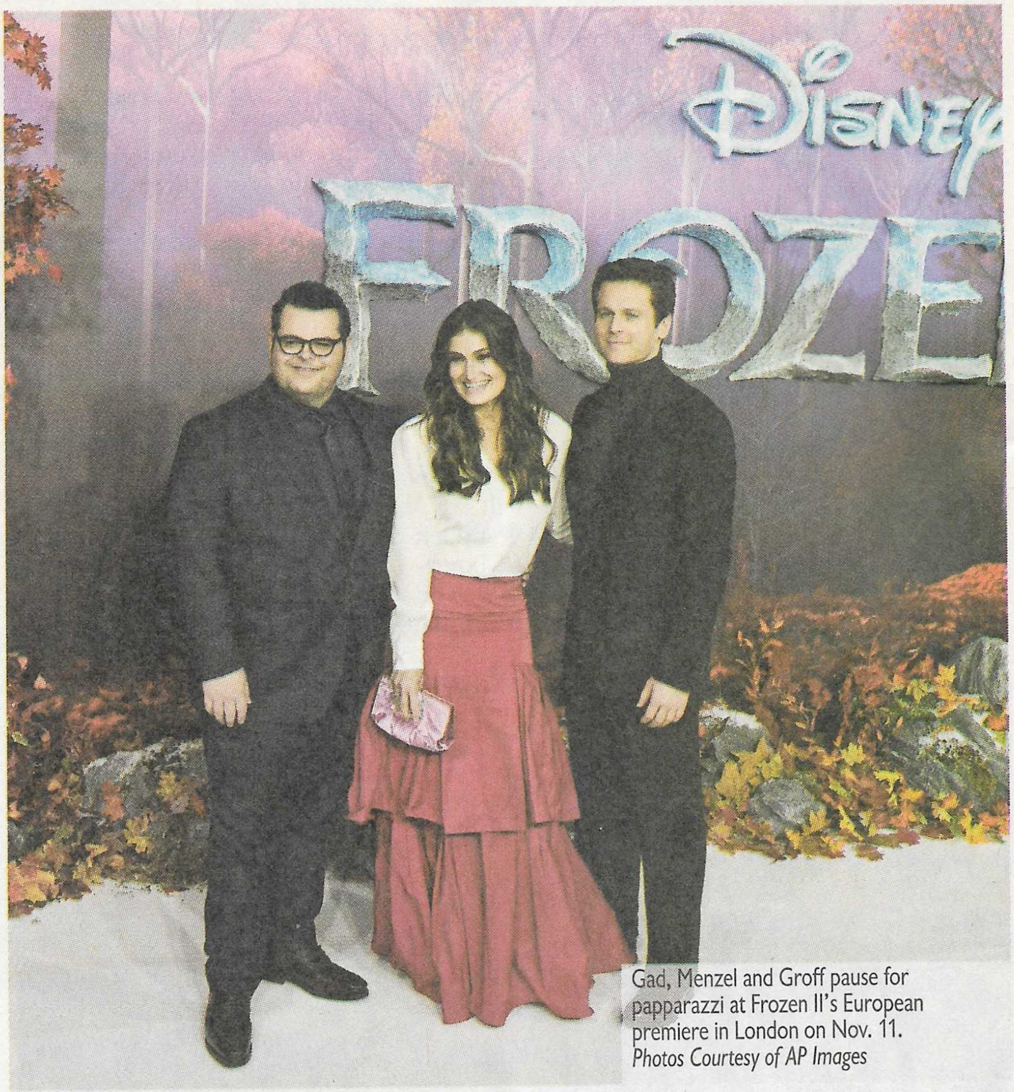
Yes, its animation was fabulous. Yes, its soundtrack was beautiful. Yes, its characters were as lovable as ever. But "Frozen II"'s storyline paled in comparison to its predecessor.

The movie opens with King Agnarr (Alfred Molina) telling his young daughters, Elsa (Idina Menzel) and Anna (Kristen Bell), a bedtime story about their kingdom's past. King Runeard (Jeremy Sisto), his father, gifted the people of Northuldra a dam between Arendelle and their home, the Enchanted Forest. But a violent battle unexpectedly ensued between the Northuldrans and the Arendellians, and King Runeard died. After the battle, the elemental spirits of fire, earth, air and water were infuriated enough to trap everyone involved in a mist around the land.

Fast forward a few years.

Queen Elsa, although she is happy with the peace that her kingdom has enjoyed for three years after the events of the last movie, is bored with Arendelle's regularity. So instantaneously that it feels disingenuous, Elsa begins hearing a mysterious voice that is calling her away from her kingdom to wherever it originates. It is from Northuldra, to no one's surprise.

She then sings what I guess is supposed to be homologous to the first movie's "Let it Go"—but "Into the Unknown" disenchanted me.


Gad, Menzel and Groff pause for papparazzi at Frozen II's European premiere in London on Nov. 11.
Photos Courtesy of AP Images

While both power ballads promote a resonating message—both encourage self discovery—"Into the Unknown" felt too forced. Its gorgeous vocals did not excuse the raging déjà vu it made me feel from the first movie. Like in "Frozen I," Elsa decides during the course of the song to forgo the status quo and embark on an adventure away from her kingdom.

The rest of "Frozen II" similarly parallels "Frozen I." Princess Anna follows her sister, but this time the journey is to a different place, Northuldra. There, the sisters discover that the dam their father mentioned was not a gift of peace—rather, it was an act of separation, and the Northuldrans' angry response was justified. The dam functioned as a literal wall between the two kingdoms, so that revelation was predictable. And Arendelle and Northuldra rekindle a harmonious relationship. Cue the eye roll.

Olaf (Josh Gad) and Kristoff (Jonathan Groff) both give obligatory performances.

Olaf mischievously inserts himself into whatever Anna is doing, making her laugh and offering deep life advice. In "Frozen I," it was, "some people are worth melting for." In "Frozen 2," it was, "if you can't do the best right thing, do the next right thing."

Kristoff chases after Anna, arriving at just the right moment to save her from angry giants—instead of the snow giants from "Frozen I," they are earth giants. The lack of variation there truly disappointed me.

Perhaps it's unfair to compare the sequel to the original, but Disney had ample time to devise a flawless storyline for "Frozen II"—the first one debuted in 2013. Viewers deserved better than this cheap copy. It will not melt anyone's frozen heart.

'THE OFFICE' AND 'FRIENDS' TO LEAVE NETFLIX, FANS BEHIND

by Lauren Johnson, Staff Writer

As we approach the '20s, TV bingers are left no choice but to kiss Pam, Jim, Prison Mike, Rachel Green, Chandler and other beloved TV personas goodbye. That's right folks, "The Office" and "Friends" are dumping Netflix and storming out the door.

Fans were none too pleased this past summer when Netflix announced the removal of "The Office" from Netflix in 2021, following the removal of "Friends" on Jan.1, 2020.

Since the beginning of 2018, there has been speculation that "Friends" would inevitably leave Netflix. The streaming service's decision to keep "Friends" for another full year came at a price, however. According to the New York Times, the appeasement of Friends fans in 2019 alone cost Netflix nearly $100 million.

"The Office" is every bit as valuable as 52 million minutes of Jim Halpert's classic pranks and Michael Scott's childish banter have been collectively streamed over the years. The show also accounts for three percent of all views on Netflix.

Office aficionado and senior Cameron Conrad said that he has seen every episode of "The Office" nearly half a dozen times, noting that it's the main reason why he has Netflix.

"I'll probably buy the NBCUniversal Streaming Service when 'The Office' comes on it...but if 'The Office' were kept on Netflix, I would probably not switch streaming services."

In fact, NBCUniversal is not the only service who's claiming exclusive streaming rights to hits like "The Office"; services such as Hulu, HBO Max and Disney+ are just as involved in the scramble for streaming rights as NBC is.

Junior Alliah McMillan was surprised to hear the "The Office" and "Friends" were leaving Netflix in the first place.

"Dang. Netflix sales are going to be down, people are going to leave."

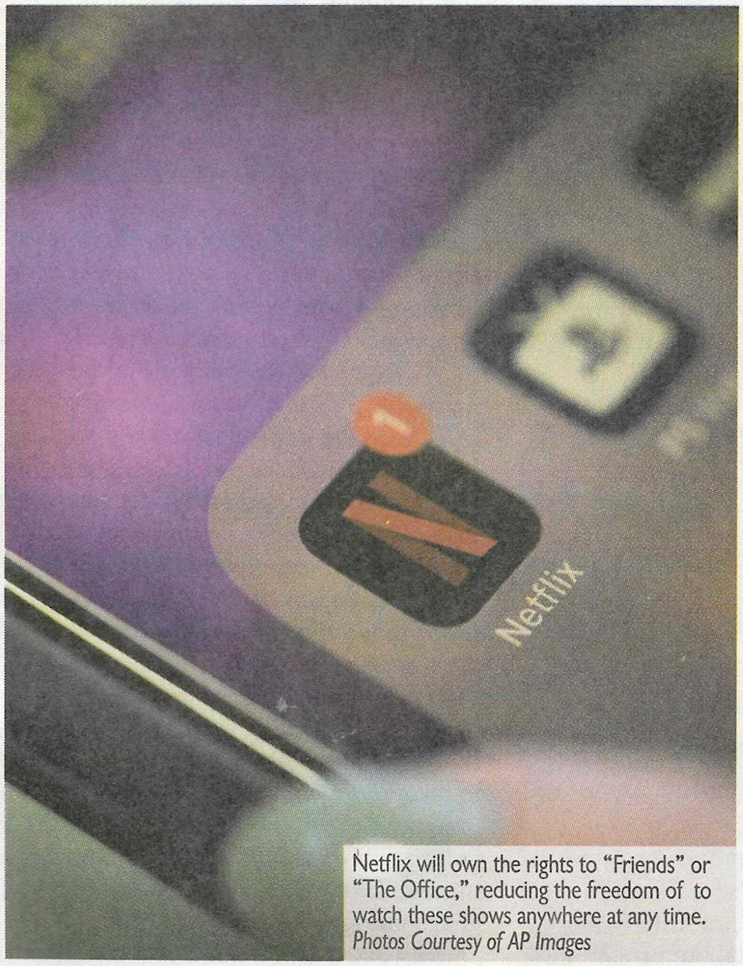
McMillan said that though she has considered purchasing other streaming services like Disney +, she likely won't subscribe to whatever her favorite shows are on.

"I'll consider buying the DVDs instead of getting NBC (Universal). I already have Netflix and Hulu, so I don't want to overdo it."

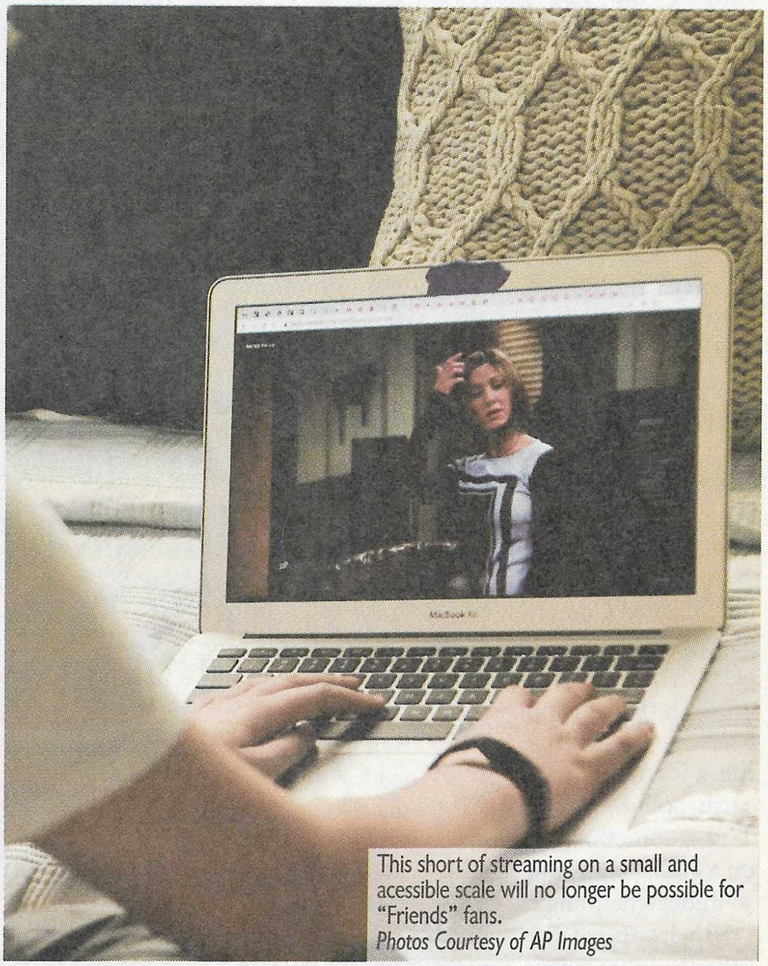
And though some students may go lengths to get their fill of, say, "Ugly Naked Guy" or "Michael Scarn," one student knows he won't be following "The Office" when it leaves Netflix.

Senior Denis Pandarakalam was frank when he said he'll use alternative methods of viewing it.

"I'll probably pirate it. It's a lot easier to pirate than to buy whatever it's on."



Netflix will own the rights to "Friends" or "The Office," reducing the freedom of to watch these shows anywhere at any time.
Photos Courtesy of AP Images



This short of streaming on a small and acessible scale will no longer be possible for "Friends" fans.
Photos Courtesy of AP Images

ARE WE GIVING PLASTIC STRAWS TOO MUCH ATTENTION?

An assortment of colorful plastic straws.
photo courtesy of AP Images

by Jack Barker, Sports Editor

Your plastic straw ban is cute, but how much do you really think you're helping the environment?

Let's be real here, not that much.

The United States involvement in plastic waste ending up in the ocean is huge numerically, but doesn't match that of countries like China. In an article posted by the National Review, the US is only responsible for as little as 0.9 percent of the plastic that ends up in the ocean.

Now am I pro-polluting the earth? Absolutely not. But, the thing is, people have taken one photo of a sea turtle and blown it way out of proportion and have begun to blame plastic straws for the entire thing.

According to Jim Leape, co-director of the Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions, plastic straws make up less than one percent of the overall plastic waste issue.

With the issue only making up a mere percentage of what's going on, don't you think it's a little ridiculous to put all of our earth-polluting eggs in one small basket? This is something that should be addressed on a global scale, but starting with straws is so underwhelming.

Environmentalists should start with something far bigger, for instance, plastic water bottles. While the bottles technically could be reused, they rarely are.

The same goes for plastic cups, which are used by giant companies like Starbucks. Starbucks is trying to do their part by vowing to not use plastic straws by 2020, but will continue to hand out their drinks in plastic cups, which create far more waste. I see what it's trying to do, but why not overhaul the use of plastic entirely if the company is really serious about helping the environment.

> **"DON'T YOU THINK IT'S A LITTLE RIDICULOUS TO PUT ALL OF OUR EARTH-POLLUTING EGGS IN ONE BASKET?"**

Also, what about the disabled? There are people with limited to no movement who can't grasp a cup and the only thing they can resort to is plastic straws. Now I understand that there are sustainable options for plastic straws, but people that can't use them will have to think ahead of time and constantly be carrying the reusable item with them. Not to mention, some will not be able to use the alternatives because they need plastic straws to be posed a certain way so they can drink.

President Trump has voiced his opinion saying, "You know it's interesting about plastic straws, so, you have a little straw, but what about the plates, the wrappers and everything else that are much bigger and they're made of the same material … it's interesting everybody focuses on the straws [but] there's a lot of other things to focus on."

Take, for instance, a large city like Los Angeles which has taken serious strides to combat the use of plastic straws, but seems to sit on its hands when it comes to addressing the homeless population and the issues that it entails.

Is plastic polluting the earth and harming sea life a big deal? Yes, but I think one photo of a turtle with a straw in its nose shouldn't shift the focus to one thing. There are much bigger things polluting our cities, beaches and oceans that aren't straws, and I think it's time we give them some love too.

SOMETIMES CELEBRITY ACTIVISM BRINGS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

by Cassi Reaka, Student Life Editor

Celebrities supporting causes is not anything new. From Angelina Jolie supporting refugees to Jim Carrey speaking out about mental health, there is certainly no shortage of celebrities supporting organizations.

The issue with celebrity activism is that it sparks short term involvement and excitement, but can make the "long work of undoing systemic injustice less visible and even more difficult," according to NBC News.

Take Kim Kardashian supporting prison reform. She, along with her lawyers, worked to free 17 people from prison who committed low level crimes and is helping to fund the 90 Days of Freedom Campaign, according to NBC.

Kardashian revealed a plan to make a TV documentary about her efforts of reform, according to NBC, which brings up another issue with celebrity activism: What was the motive?

The documentary will continue to bring exposure to the issues and organizations that are working for prison reform, but it also makes Kardashian's endorsement seem a lot more self-serving.

Even if she had pure motives, these small acts are not going to fully alter anything, but the media shows that there is change happening so things must be better now, right?

While exposure from celebrities can be indispensable for getting movements off the ground, it can also corrupt the public's view of the cause.

The Me Too movement was started over 10 years ago on MySpace by activist Tarana Burke according to The New York Times. The movement did not blow up, however, until 2017 when actress Alyssa Milano asked in a tweet that women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted write Me Too on their status in order to show the world the magnitude of the issue.

The exposure has certainly helped to bring attention to the issue, but it has shifted the focus from everyday people to the world of celebrities and Hollywood.

"That attention has caused people to make this connection that #MeToo is about white women in Hollywood," Burke told AP News.

A major criticism of the movement has been that it has left out women and girls of color according to AP News, which is ironic considering that the founder of the movement is a woman of color.

"That attention has caused people to make this connection that #MeToo is about white women in Hollywood," Burke told AP News. "The #MeToo movement is a survivor's movement and it's for everybody. I just want to make that point extra clear."

I am not trying to diminish celebrities' experiences of sexual harassment, but the way that the movement was spread has made it seem like an exclusive thing and it should not be.

The attention drawn from Hollywood has also placed the focus on the accused instead of on the victims. Because the accused are typically big name celebrities or producers, the movement in Hollywood has made some people think of the Me Too movement as anti-men.

Celebrity endorsement and activism can be a positive thing when done with pure intentions and when the celebrities understand the impact that they are making. The attention that they draw to organizations can be indispensable, but can sometimes do more harm than good.

Founder of the Me Too movement Tarana Burke gives a speech.
photo courtesy of AP Images

LOOKING BEHIND THE SMILING FACADE OF FACEBOOK

by Ryan Stewart, Co-Editor-in-Chief

The year: 2009. The month: December. Facebook reaches 350 million registered users and 132 million monthly users, granting them the distinction of being the most popular social platform. They've easily kept this title for 10 long years and through that time the rinky dink company that could became the overbearing company that we all hope won't.

When it comes to Facebook, there is a delicate balance that they maintain between being the darling of modern communication and the face of a corporate steamroller that will flatten every shred of your privacy in the pursuit of their favorite green paper.

U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES
MR.
ZUCKER

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg arrives for a House Financial Services Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.
Photo courtesy of AP Images

On the friendlier side of things, Facebook promotes the positive aspects of their platform, like how it's easier now to connect with old friends and forge new friendships as well as connecting people who need to communicate for work or school.

Some researchers like those at the University of Melbourne in Australia even believe that breaks to check Facebook to stay in touch with one's social life can lead to happier, more productive workers.

However, those researchers were only looking at one aspect of Facebook. They didn't examine the scandal, the questionable policies and the egregious mishandling of private data by the company.

Which brings us to the dark side of the bright and shiny, big ol' smile that Facebook grins at the public after they've done wrong. This is the side that Facebook seeks to distract the public from with shiny new side projects like their VR company, or a heavy-handed push for the focus to be shifted to the tech side of their business entirely.

For a company dedicated entirely to public communications, the art of spinning scandals is not only practiced, it's used more often than not. And by "more often," I mean always.

Take one of the most important breaches in social media history: the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal. In early 2018 it was revealed that the British political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica harvested the personal data of millions of Facebook users without permission.

While this may not sound like Facebook's fault, make no mistake that the data breach, as Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg refused to call it, instead referring to it as a "breach of trust," fell entirely on Facebook's shoulders when they failed to actively present the possibility of their using personal data however they may please.

Providing an implied right of access to private data doesn't qualify as a proper and open communication of Facebook acting as any company should, with the goal being the understanding between consumer and company of how each benefit from the arrangement.

However, when it comes to Facebook, we're left in the dark with just enough light let through to allow us the illusion of illumination.

The only hope I thought would be left for a true connection of corporate entity and Joe Schmoe is the bastion of open communication: Congress.

The year is now 2019. The month is now October.

Zuckerburg, in what is widely regarded as a joke appearance before Congress —spawning an incalculable amount of memes— testifies that Facebook has not acted in any matter that would endanger sensitive private data, or has in any way engaged in behavior to interfere with the 2016 election through political machinations in the form of targeted advertising.

And while that is just untrue, to be frank, I've only mentioned one instance of data problems. There are numerous more situations and the fact that targeted advertising has been a longstanding acknowledged fact by most people —just go to any store with your location on and see what sort of ads you get for a small example — the larger problem still hasn't been addressed.

In the name of connection, communication and entertainment we have, by our own free will, handed over our private, essential, dangerously fragile data.

And while this may seem like an irreversible mistake, though to some degree it is, there are still some small things that can be done to greatly minimize the possible damage: lobbying for political change at the local and, more importantly, state and federal levels or steering away from companies that offer a nonessential and deceivingly positive service.

ASK EHS

"A snow day, because the one day escape from school stress is nicer than just another day of summer."
-senior William Day

"I would rather have a snow day because they are nice breaks to have during school, especially when we do not have many days off. Summer break is plenty long, and I do not mind sacrificing a few days of it to have snow days off during the winter."
-sophomore Logan Roever

"I would rather have more summer days because for those in summer school, they can actually enjoy a summer. Having a longer summer break can also help refresh for the new school year."
-sophomore Eman Rana

"I'd have to go with more summer because snow days push everything back and the workload becomes even more stressful in the end."
-junior Jordyn Ginestra

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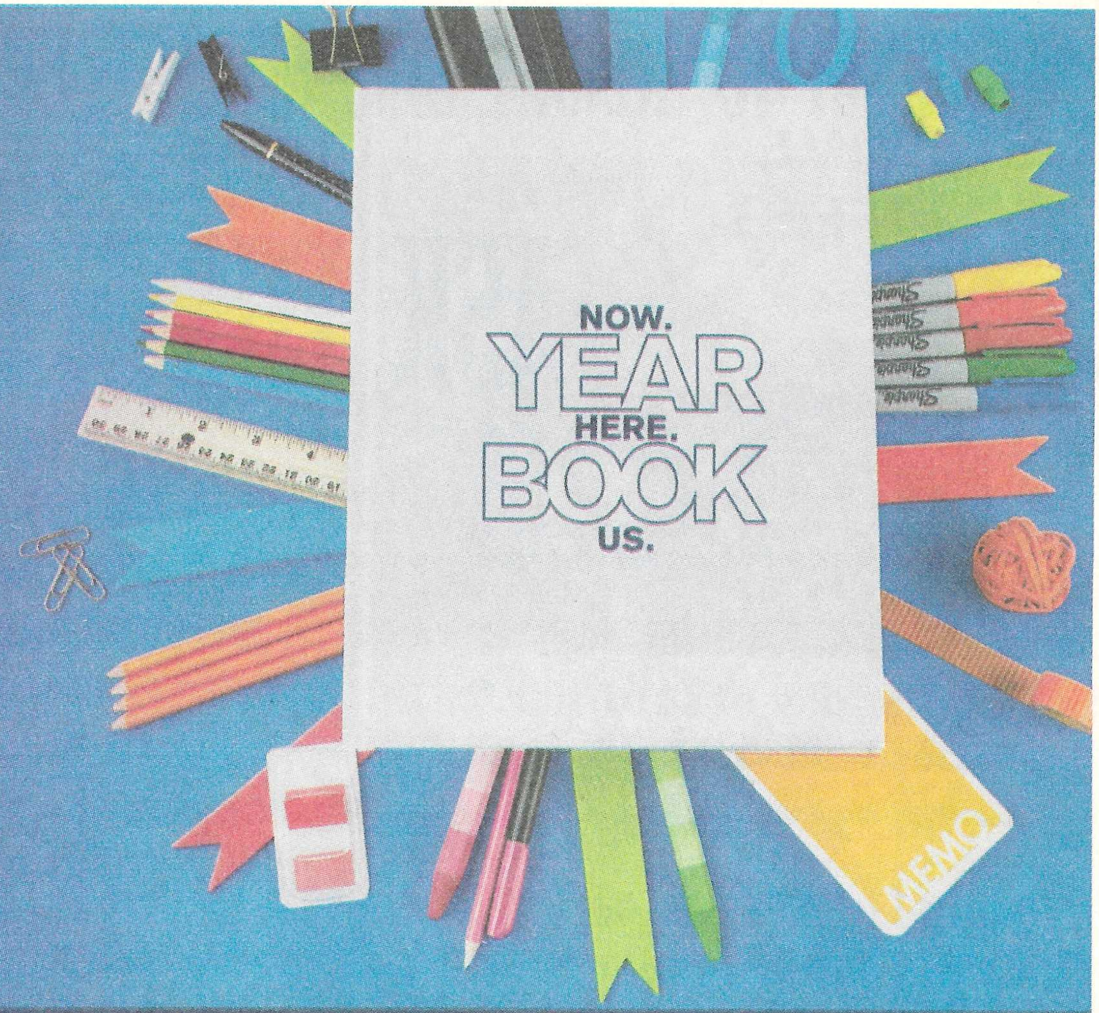

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